
HOUSE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO ESTABLISH AND RECOMMEND FEDERAL AND LOCAL SUBSIDIES FOR THE TRANSPORT OF WATERBORNE CARGO AND TO WORK AND CONSULT WITH THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, HAWAII'S CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION, AND THE LEGISLATURE.

1 WHEREAS, the Hawaii Water Carriers Working Group was
2 established pursuant to Senate Resolution No. 125, S.D. 1,
3 Regular Session of 2020, to recommend mid-term and long-term
4 solutions to balance the need for continuous interisland water
5 carrier service throughout the State with the need for water
6 carriers to maintain financial sustainability; and
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8 WHEREAS, on December 27, 2021, the working group issued its
9 final report on its findings and recommendations; and
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11 WHEREAS, the final report noted that Hawaii's communities
12 are mostly dependent on the import of goods, with over eighty
13 percent of goods consumed in Hawaii being imported, of which
14 over ninety-eight percent is transported as waterborne cargo;
15 and
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17 WHEREAS, Hawaii must rely heavily on transport of cargo by
18 water carrier, unlike other communities in the continental
19 United States that have alternative means of transporting goods
20 by truck and rail; and
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22 WHEREAS, the cost of shipping goods to and within Hawaii is
23 reflected in the cost of imported goods consumed in Hawaii and
24 has been calculated to be as much as 7.5 percent of the cost of
25 the goods; and
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27 WHEREAS, due to Hawaii's dependency on the import of goods,
28 maritime support to ensure food security in the State is
29 required; and



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2 WHEREAS, while there are agricultural specific subsidies as
3 well as subsidies for aircrafts transporting to remote
4 destinations, subsidies do not currently exist for general cargo
5 transport to and within Hawaii; and

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7 WHEREAS, the final report recommended a broad subsidy for
8 trans-Pacific and interisland cargo to reduce the cost of goods;
9 and

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11 WHEREAS, the final report further recommended that the
12 source of such subsidies be from existing or newly created
13 federal, state, and county government programs; and

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15 WHEREAS, the final report specifically recommended that the
16 Legislature pass a resolution directing the Department of
17 Transportation to convene a working group to establish and
18 recommend federal, state, and county subsidies for the transport
19 of waterborne cargo and to provide an update on the status of
20 creating these programs; and

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22 WHEREAS, the final report also recommended that the
23 Department of Transportation lead a committee to continue
24 working and consulting with the:

25
26 (1) United States Department of Transportation in the
27 establishment of a federal waterborne cargo subsidies
28 program, including the drafting of potential
29 legislation;

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31 (2) Hawaii's congressional delegation to sponsor a bill to
32 establish a federal waterborne cargo subsidies program
33 within the United States Department of Transportation;
34 and

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36 (3) Transportation committees of the Hawaii Senate and
37 House of Representatives, county departments of
38 transportation, and county councils in the
39 establishment of local waterborne cargo subsidies
40 program, including the drafting of legislation; now,
41 therefore,
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1 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
2 Thirty-third Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
3 of 2025, that the Department of Transportation is requested to
4 convene a working group to establish and recommend federal,
5 state, and county subsidies for the transport of waterborne
6 cargo; and
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8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested
9 to consist of:
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- 11 (1) The Director of Transportation, or the Director's
12 designee, who is requested to serve as the
13 Chairperson;
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- 15 (2) The Director of Business, Economic Development, and
16 Tourism, or the Director's designee;
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- 18 (3) The Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture, or the
19 Chairperson's designee;
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- 21 (4) One member of the Senate, to be appointed by the
22 President of the Senate;
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- 24 (5) One member of the House of Representatives, to be
25 appointed by the Speaker of the House of
26 Representatives;
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- 28 (6) Each chairperson of the standing committees with the
29 purview of transportation of the Senate and House of
30 Representatives;
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- 32 (7) The mayor of each county or the mayor's designee; and
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- 34 (8) One representative from each water carrier operating
35 in the State, to be invited by the Chairperson; and
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37 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of
38 Transportation is requested to lead a committee to continue
39 working and consulting with the:
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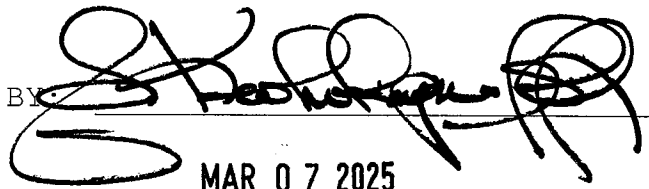


- 1 (1) United States Department of Transportation in the
2 establishment of a federal waterborne cargo subsidies
3 program, including the drafting of legislation;
4
- 5 (2) Hawaii's congressional delegation to sponsor a bill to
6 establish a federal waterborne cargo subsidies program
7 within the United States Department of Transportation;
8 and
9
- 10 (3) Transportation committees of the Hawaii Senate and
11 House of Representatives, county departments of
12 transportation, and county councils in the
13 establishment of local waterborne cargo subsidies
14 program, including the drafting of legislation; and
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16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of
17 Transportation is requested to submit a report providing an
18 update on the status of creating these programs to the
19 Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
20 the Regular Session of 2026; and
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22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
23 Resolution be transmitted to the members of Hawaii's
24 congressional delegation; Director of Transportation; Director
25 of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism; Chairperson of
26 the Board of Agriculture; and the mayors of each county.
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OFFERED BY:


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